

REMARKS

Claims 14-17, 20, 21, 23-26, 30-34 and 36-40 are pending in the present application. Claims 23 and 30 have been amended and claims 10, 12, 18, 19, 27-29 and 35 have been canceled without prejudice to disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 14, 23, 30 and 37 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Reasons for Entry of Amendments

It is respectfully requested that the present amendments be entered into the Official File in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application into condition for allowance. In the alternative, if the Examiner does not believe the application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner enter the amendments for the purposes of appeal. The amendments to the claims simplify the issues on appeal by directing all of the claims in the present application to subject matter indicated by the Examiner as being allowable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 10, 12, 18, 19, 27-29 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hashimoto et al., EP 913 465 A1. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, claims 10, 12, 18, 19, 27-29 and 35 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 have been rendered moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Examiner's Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that claims 14-17, 20, 21, 31-34 and 36-40 are allowed. In addition, dependent claims 23-26 and 30 have been objected to. Applicant greatly appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

As the Examiner will note, dependent claim 23 has been amended to include the subject matter of independent claim 10. In addition, dependent claim 30 has been amended to include the subject matter of independent claim 10 and dependent claims 27 and 28. In view of this, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 23-26 and 30 are now in condition for allowance.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims in the present application are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and early allowance of the present application are therefore respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

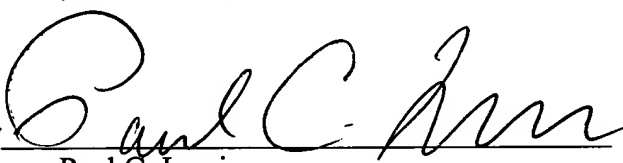
Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant respectfully petitions for one (1) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of **\$55.00** is attached hereto.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Paul C. Lewis, Registration No. 43,368 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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